As one of the top ten Catholic health systems in the United States, CHRISTUS Health is an international health care provider committed to delivering high-quality, accessible care. CHRISTUS is a leading provider of uncompensated care among not-for-profit health care systems and operates in states with some of the highest rates of uninsured, including Texas, Louisiana, and New Mexico. We employ more than 30,000 individuals and treat more than three million patients annually through almost 350 facilities, including more than 50 hospitals and long-term care facilities, 175 clinics and outpatient centers, and dozens of other health care ministries.

The U.S. Family Health Plan (USFHP) program offers a TRICARE Prime health insurance plan through the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to retired service members, their families, and the families of active-duty service members. The USFHP managed care plan is available through six non-profit health care providers in six regions across the country as a type of TRICARE Prime benefit, limited to service areas defined by Zip Code. The USFHP plan achieved a member satisfaction rating of 92.5 percent in 2013, and it has surpassed the satisfaction rates of other managed care plans for 19 consecutive years.

CHRISTUS Health has been a designated provider within the USFHP program since 1981. The plan made available through CHRISTUS Health serves 11,625 beneficiaries in southeastern Texas and 256 beneficiaries in western Louisiana. The USFHP network of hospitals includes St. Joseph Medical Center in Houston, Houston Methodist St. John Hospital in Clear Lake, Houston Methodist St. Catherine Hospital in Katy, CHRISTUS St. Mary Hospital in Port Arthur, and CHRISTUS St. Patrick Hospital in Lake Charles.

The USFHP program offers unique benefits through an integrated managed care approach that focuses on wellness and provides innovative health care techniques to ensure quality of care. A recent Milliman analysis of the USFHP program found that inpatient utilization for TRICARE Prime members was 50 percent higher and emergency room utilization was almost 40 percent higher when compared to a similar USFHP population. The Final Report of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission highlights the USFHP program as a successful model of population health management.
The USFHP Program Provides a Successful Model of Population Health Management

In its Final Report, the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission cited the USFHP program as an important example of how to use population health management techniques to improve patient care. Enrollees in the USFHP program have the same copayment structure as TRICARE Prime enrollees, but they have the additional benefit of care management. The Commission commended the USFHP program for its use of disease management, wellness and care coordination techniques.

Aside from the USFHP program, TRICARE does not use care management strategies to improve enrollees’ health outcomes. As a result, USFHP enrollees have 33 percent fewer days in inpatient hospitals and 28 percent fewer emergency department visits when compared to TRICARE Prime enrollees.

✓ The USFHP program works to decrease preventable hospital admissions and readmissions, reduce the length of stay in hospitals, and reduce emergency room and urgent care visits by employing strategies to identify high-risk patients, manage complex cases and chronic diseases, and promote wellness and preventive services.

✓ All of the USFHP designated providers have a 24-hour telephone hotline where beneficiaries can access nurses or primary care physicians, who can provide general health information, self-care instructions, and guidance on whether to seek emergency care services.

✓ Registered-nurse case managers work with USFHP enrollees who are frequent users of the emergency department to provide assistance with care and medication management.

The Commission’s Final Report proposes to eliminate TRICARE and to instead provide coverage through a new DOD health benefit program, “TRICARE Choice.” The new program would give eligible DOD beneficiaries the option to receive care at on-base military treatment facilities (MTFs) or to choose a commercial plan offered through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

The Commission recommended that plans currently offered through the USFHP program remain available as an option for coverage under TRICARE Choice. The Commission recognized that the USFHP program adds value to the DOD health care system and can serve as a successful model of population health management as reforms are considered in the future.